

faculty. His gifts as a satirist are brilliant. Mrs. Betterton, Mr. Sita Ram, and above all the admirable Burlap are creations possessing all the force of Dickens. But the opening scenes between Walter and Marjorie, so tragic and true, are worthy of the great Russians, which is a new kind of eulogy to pronounce on a great Englishman.

CONAN DOYLE'S LAST WORDS

By W. R. TITTERTON

From the *Daily Herald*, London Labor Daily

'LET ME SIT on the couch beside you,' said Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. 'In every other way I'm the man I always was, but my heart's claiming some of my attention, and it is better not to tire my voice.'

He looked very huge, sitting beside me, with his grizzled eyebrows, the farseeing eyes of the voyager, his massive head, square jaw, and viking moustache. He was, indeed, much more like an old warrior than an old story-writer.

'What are we here for?' he said. 'Well, perhaps we can guess that only by being clear on what we are not here for.'

'It cannot be the object of life that we should have three meals a day and a sound night's rest. Nor that we should work at some humdrum task, as most of us have to, for from eight to ten hours a day. That seems clear, doesn't it?'

W. R. T.: Well, Sir Arthur, there is some ground for the idea that the work of a man's hands is his reason to be. Yours, for instance . . .

Sir Arthur: My work is not typical. What of the liftman and the machine-minder? Was man made to work a lift, or look after a machine?

W. R. T.: Obviously not! But then I submit that no man should have such daily tasks.

Sir Arthur: That is another question. In any case I think it is clear that we must look elsewhere for the purpose of man's existence. The difficulty is that trying to ascertain the purpose of any single life is like taking one chapter from the middle of a story, and then wondering what the beginning and the end can be. [He placed his strong hands on his great knees, and his eyes took on that far look which seemed natural to them.] To me it is clear that the function of all creation is to move from the material to the spiritual, and that therefore the spiritualizing of the individual is the object of life.'

W. R. T.: And the means to that end?

Sir Arthur: Sorrow and conflict are the two most powerful.

W. R. T.: Then sorrow is not an evil?

Sir Arthur: No, indeed. It is the very essence of the process. In a spirit message I read once: 'We do pity the poor people who have no sorrows.' Another said: 'It is like the scales, when the pan of sorrow goes down, the other pan goes up.' If a man of seventy is no more gentle, kindly, sympathetic, unselfish than he was at thirty, then his life has been wasted. He has not become more spiritual, and he must go through life again, either here or in another sphere. Most men, I think, do improve, and therefore fulfill the object of life.

W. R. T.: Is a creed necessary?

Sir Arthur: I do not think creeds have any effect. You cannot say that the increase in spirituality is greater in a Roman, a Greek, or a Lutheran community.

W. R. T.: But don't these three churches define the object of life in similar terms?

Sir Arthur: They have all the teaching of Christ and the example of His life to guide them. But it is deeds, not creeds . . . Character is everything, belief is nothing. An agnostic may be a saint, a purist in doctrine may be a devil. The age of faith is dead.

W. R. T.: Yet you believe in God.

Sir Arthur: I realize the existence of something wise and all-powerful which I call God. But that is not faith, it is knowledge. This is the age of knowledge. Knowledge will come and is coming through communications from beings who are superior to ourselves.

W. R. T.: But is not faith needed to accept these communications?

Sir Arthur: We accept nothing without proof. The religion of the future will be built up from the standpoint of two worlds, not of one.

W. R. T.: Yet you say that you receive communications from beings superior to ourselves.

Sir Arthur: Yes, they have gone on improving in the other world, but our purpose and place in the beyond is regulated by our unselfishness here. And that is the object of life, that is the teaching of spiritualism, which foolish clerics ignore as a mass of delusions.

W. R. T.: I do not think it is an illusion, but is it not dangerous?

Sir Arthur: It has its dangers, like all spiritual and physical phenomena. Naturally the spirits who can most readily communicate with us are those nearest to earth. Those are not the highest. Some of them may be of very low mentality, perhaps even mischievous, but they are not devils.

W. R. T.: What of dogmatic religion?

Sir Arthur: There should be a clearing of old ruins. That has largely been done. One should not be too drastic. One should hold on to all that can be held on to. Above all, without any mysticism, the character of Christ and His teaching give us a permanent standard of ethics. The

Sermon on the Mount and spiritual communications give us all that is needful. The messages from beyond are infinitely consoling.

W. R. T.: In what way?

Sir Arthur: They show us that we all can reach the ultimate goal.

W. R. T.: What is the ultimate goal?

Sir Arthur: Life on a higher plane. Death for the average man is the beginning of his true and happy life in which he is not changed or translated to an unimaginable and uncomfortable hell, or a hardly less uncomfortable heaven. He finds a natural life in homely surroundings, in which he develops his own natural powers. Death makes no change. Still, if the attempts to communicate with the spiritual world be made frivolously, the result may be disastrous. You may get a case of obsession.

W. R. T.: I have no doubt of that. . . . [And I told him of a poet who, with two friends, tried to raise a spirit; and how one of them went mad, and the poet was for years obsessed by the thing they had raised.]

Sir Arthur: Are you sure of that?

W. R. T.: I had it at second hand. My informant is a trustworthy person.

Sir Arthur: Well, it is possible. But when the attempt to communicate is prompted by sincere desire for greater spiritual knowledge such things do not and cannot occur.

W. R. T.: You use prayers and hymns?

Sir Arthur: Yes, simple prayers for guidance, and such simple hymns as 'Lead, Kindly Light.'

W. R. T.: You were not always a spiritualist. I gathered from your earlier books that you were an agnostic.

Sir Arthur: I was brought up a Catholic and educated at Stonyhurst. When I studied medicine I came to adopt the agnostic position. And, on its own plane, I still think it is unanswerable. Then I was persuaded to attend a seance, and I got absolute proof that it is possible to communicate with the unseen world. But I attached no importance to the fact. Indeed, though I studied the question for twenty-five years, it was only when war came that I realized the tremendous value of the discovery. Now I live to spread the knowledge of it and to gain more knowledge. You should come to one of our meetings. We have churches all over England now.

W. R. T.: I am afraid.

Sir Arthur: There is no need to be. It will make you very happy.

Out in the hall I was introduced to Lady Doyle and Sir Arthur's two large sons. I told them that I had read every one of Sir Arthur's stories, and knew many of them almost by heart. So we tackled the Sharkey ones; and the adventures of that black-hearted, filmy-eyed pirate and

his encounters with Stephen Craddock and Copley Banks were passed in review. There was no time for more than that. I got through with honors, and my host was pleased. For I remembered the stories far better than he did. I am not certain, but I rather think that throughout the interview we did not mention the name of Sherlock Holmes.

LORD BEAVERBROOK

Translated from the *Revue Universelle*, Paris Clerical Semimonthly

TWO MEN are to-day governing the British press, two men whom it is impossible to separate from each other although they are not identical in origin, interests, or appearance. The one is Lord Rothermere, brother and heir to the famous Lord Northcliffe, proprietor, animator, publisher, and editor of an important group of newspapers, chief among them the *Daily Mail*. The other is Lord Beaverbrook, a passionate and often maladroit adversary of Stanley Baldwin, from whom he has just tried without success to wrest the leadership of the Conservative Party. Both Rothermere and Beaverbrook belong to this party. Both, however, seem to have no dearer aims in life than to sow dissension among the Conservatives and to ruin through their manœuvres, speeches, and writings the rather enfeebled authority of the treaties on which the very precarious peace of Europe still rests. To these ends they have consecrated their influence and wealth and newspapers, with the result that the English have jokingly merged their names into one, 'Beavermere.' They have both, each in his own way, acquired the public ear, and their articles, diffused by the millions, are read with the greatest attention not only by the public but by politicians of all parties.

Canadian by origin like his former patron, Bonar Law, Lord Beaverbrook is the son of a Protestant preacher from New Brunswick in eastern Canada. While he was still called Max Aitken he devoted himself until the age of thirty with all his petulant activity to getting rich as quickly as possible, an occupation which, as everyone knows and as Lord Beaverbrook loves to repeat, demands all one's energies, especially when one chances to be born on the other side of the 'big pond.' Max Aitken succeeded fairly well in this task, for when he left his native Dominion in 1910 to go to Europe his fortune amounted to a million pounds sterling.

Grace unquestionably touched him from the first moment he set foot on the soil of Albion. Moreover, he himself one day declared that if the chief function of the American is to make money the chief function of the European is to enter politics. Thus as soon as he arrived in England he became the private secretary of Bonar Law and in this capacity